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## Federal Studies

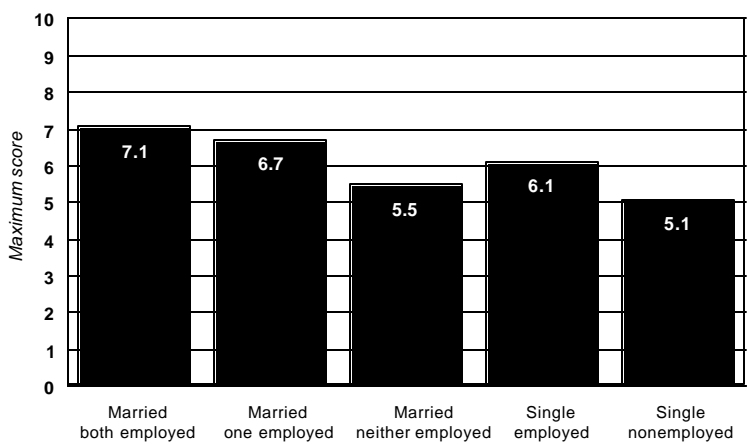
### A Child’s Day: Home, School, and Play (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)

This report presents findings from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) on the well-being of American children. A variety of indicators are used to portray children’s experiences while growing up. Data on child well-being were collected by interviews of households participating in the 1992 and 1993 SIPP panels, which were conducted at the same time in the fall of 1994. The topics covered illustrate what children experience on a daily basis, including differences in family living arrangements, economic and social environments, and the types of neighborhoods where children live. Experiences with nonparental child care arrangements, daily interactions with parents, performance in school, and participation in extracurricular activities are other indicators of child development and future well-being.

#### Dual-income married couples with children consider their neighborhoods to have higher levels of safety

On a scale of 0 to 10, where a value of 10 is the best possible rating of a parent’s views about his or her neighborhood and community, the average value was 6.6 for all parents with children in the household. The neighborhood/community index is higher for children in married-couple families where both parents work than for other children. Index scores are lower for single-parent households and households where the parents are not working.

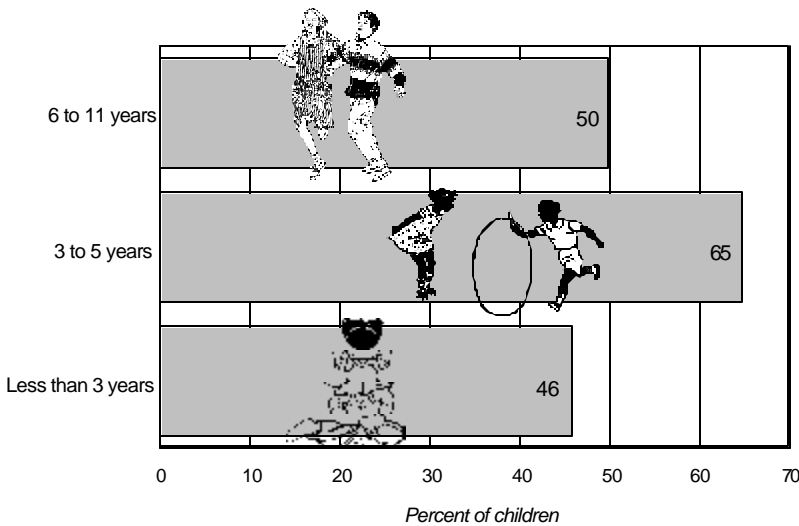
#### Average scores for perception of neighborhood safety and trust, by marital and employment status of parents, fall 1994



#### Just over half of children under age 12 have been in child care

In the fall of 1994, 20.2 million children (53 percent) under age 12 have been cared for regularly by someone other than their immediate family. Among children less than 3 years old, 46 percent had been in a regular child care arrangement, compared with 65 percent of 3- to 5-year-olds and 50 percent of 6- to 11-year-olds.

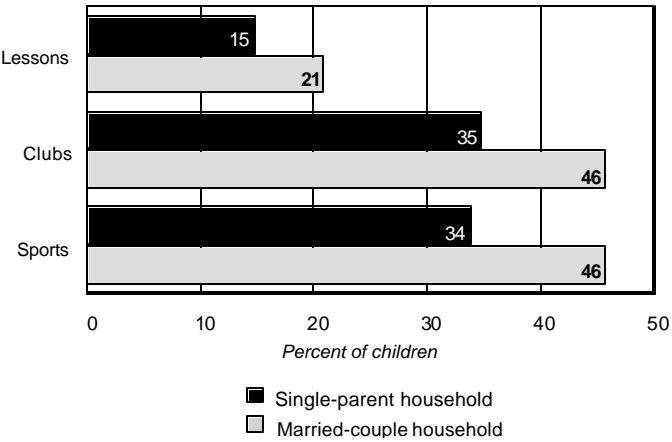
#### Children ever in child care arrangement, by age of child, fall 1994



**Household structure shapes children’s involvement in extracurricular activities**

Children’s participation in sports and clubs and enrollment in lessons are consistently higher for children in married-couple families. Among children 12 to 17 years old, 46 percent with married parents participated in sports, compared with 34 percent of children with separated, divorced, or widowed parents.

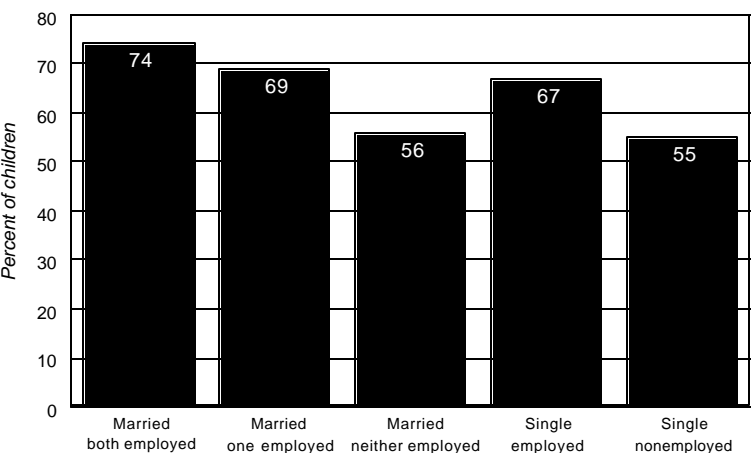
**Children 12 to 17 years old involved in extracurricular activities, by household type, fall 1994**



**Children with married, working parents are most likely to be academically on-track**

About three-quarters of children whose parents were both married and employed were academically on-track (i.e., enrolled at or above the modal grade for their age). Among children in single-parent households, those with an employed parent generally progressed more steadily in school (67 percent on-track) than those without an employed parent (55 percent on-track).

**Children 12 to 17 years old academically on-track, by marital and employment status of parents, fall 1994**



Source: Fields, J., Smith, K., Bass, L.E., and Lugaila, T., 2001, *A child’s day: Home, school, and play (selected indicators of child well-being)*, *Current Population Reports, Household Economics Studies*, P70-68, U.S. Census Bureau.

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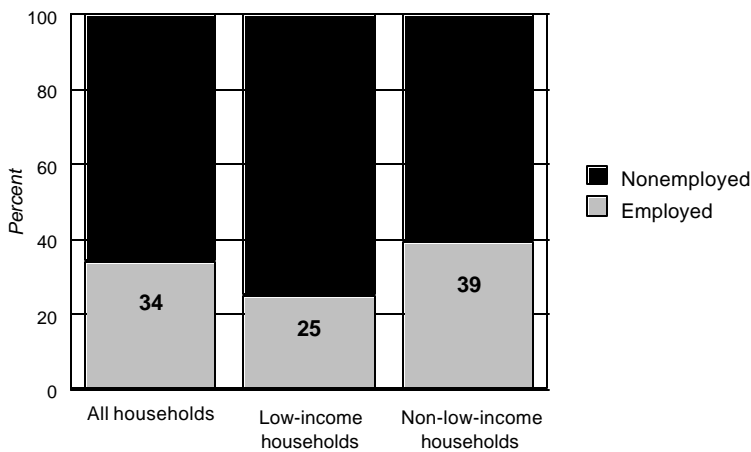
## Teenagers: Employment and Contributions to Family Spending

Although teenagers are a major expense, they can offset some of their expense as well as contribute toward their family’s economic well-being by being employed in the labor market and contributing to the family budget. This study examines the connection between the employment status of teenagers (ages 14 to 17) and family expenditures by using data from the 1997-98 Consumer Expenditure Survey. It examines the role of employed and nonemployed teenagers in family expenditures, and specifically looks at the percentage of teenagers who are employed and not employed, and the characteristics of each. This analysis is done by income level because children from low-income families may be more likely to contribute to family economic well-being than children from non-low-income households. In addition, the association of teen employment with major family expenses is analyzed.

### A higher percentage of teenagers from non-low-income households are employed

Among all teenagers, 34 percent were employed sometime during the year, with average annual earnings of \$2,270. For teenagers in low-income families, 25 percent were employed, with average annual earnings of \$1,980. For teenagers in non-low-income families, 39 percent were employed and had average annual earnings of \$2,380.

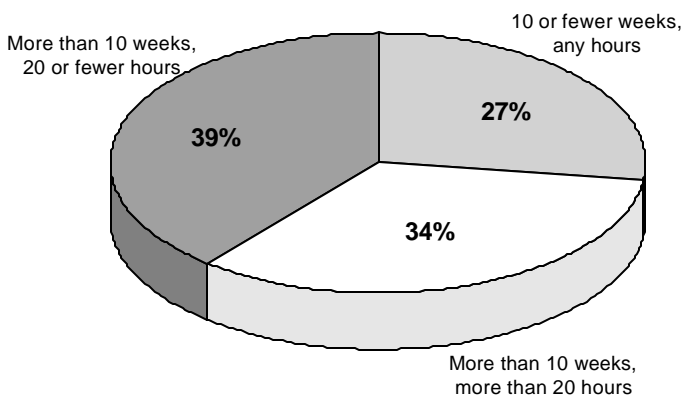
Employment of teenagers, by household income, 1997-98



### Nearly a third of employed teenagers work more than 10 weeks per year and more than 20 hours per week

Of all employed teenagers, 27 percent worked 10 or fewer weeks per year for any amount of time (likely indicating summer employment), 39 percent worked more than 10 weeks per year and 20 or fewer hours per week, and 34 percent worked more than 10 weeks per year and more than 20 hours per week. Some researchers suggest that there are negative consequences to working more than 20 hours per week for teens, such as lower educational attainment.

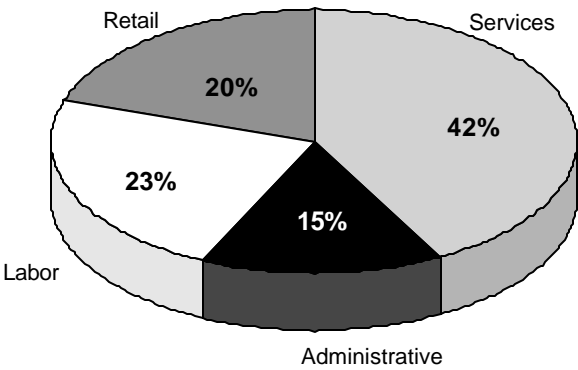
Weeks worked per year and hours worked per week by employed teenagers, 1997-98



**Service sector is major employer of teenagers**

Many teenagers work in the service sector. Among all teenagers, 42 percent worked in the service sector (e.g., waiter or waitress), 23 percent as laborers (e.g., yard work), 20 percent in retail (e.g., sales associate), and 15 percent in administrative work (e.g., secretarial or clerical). Type of employment did not vary that much between teens in low- and non-low-income households.

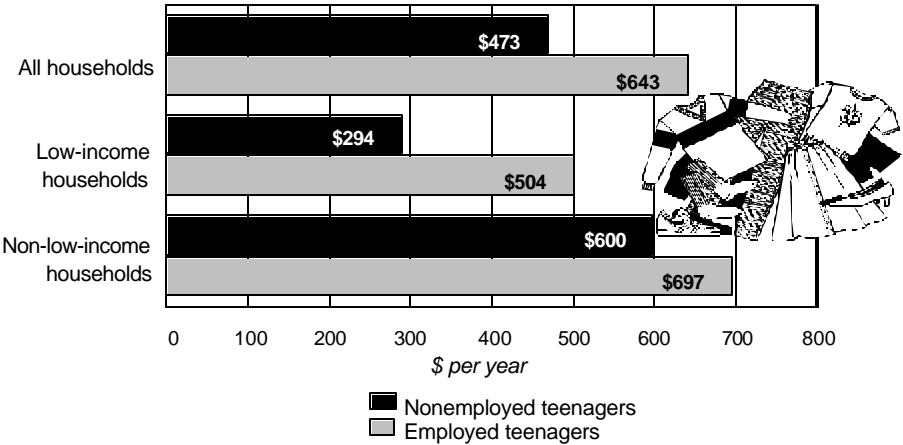
**Type of employment of teenagers, 1997-98**



**Clothing expenses higher for employed teenagers**

The clothing expenses of employed teenagers are higher than those of nonemployed teenagers (\$643 vs. \$473 per year). This held for teenagers in low- and non-low-income households. It seems that a large part of the earnings of teenagers is spent on themselves and does not go toward general household expenditures.

**Clothing expenses of teenagers, by household income, 1997-98**



Source: Johnson, D.S. and Lino, M., 2000, *Teenagers: Employment and contributions to family spending*, *Monthly Labor Review* 123(9):15-24.

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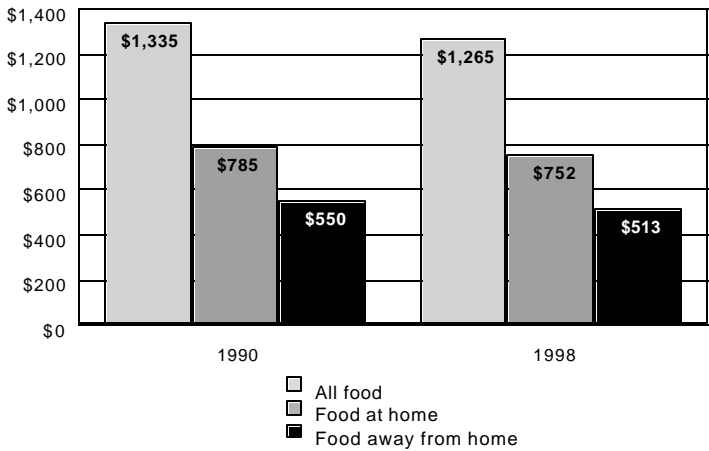
## Food Spending by U.S. Households Grew Steadily in the 1990's

The average U.S. household spent about \$2,037 per person on food in 1998, up 17 percent from the average expenditure in 1990. Food purchased at supermarkets and other food stores (i.e., food at home) rose 18 percent from 1990 to 1998, while expenditures for eating out (i.e., food away from home) rose about 15 percent. Most of the increase for food at home was for cereal and bakery products (up 22 percent), fruits and vegetables (up 22 percent), sugar and sweets (up 34 percent), and miscellaneous foods (up 25 percent). These findings are compiled from information contained in the Consumer Expenditure Survey released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics from 1990 through 1998.

### In inflation-adjusted dollars, consumers spent less on food in 1998 than in 1990

In 1990 the average per capita expenditure on food was \$1,335 (\$785 on food at home and \$550 on food away from home). In 1998 the average inflation-adjusted (converted to 1990 dollars) per capita expenditure on food was \$1,265 (\$752 on food at home and \$513 on food away from home)—about a 5-percent decrease.

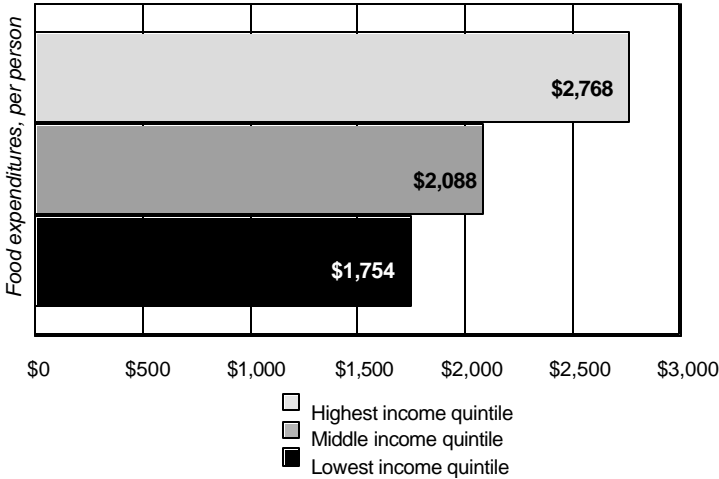
Per capita food expenditures (1990 dollars)



### Low-income households continue to spend less per person

Households tend to spend more for food as incomes rise, because they buy higher quality food items, more convenience foods, and more food away from home. In 1998 low-income households (those in the lowest income quintile, with before-tax incomes averaging \$7,306) spent \$1,754 per person on food, about 37 percent less than the \$2,768 per person spent by the wealthiest households (those in the highest income quintile, with before-tax incomes averaging \$98,310).

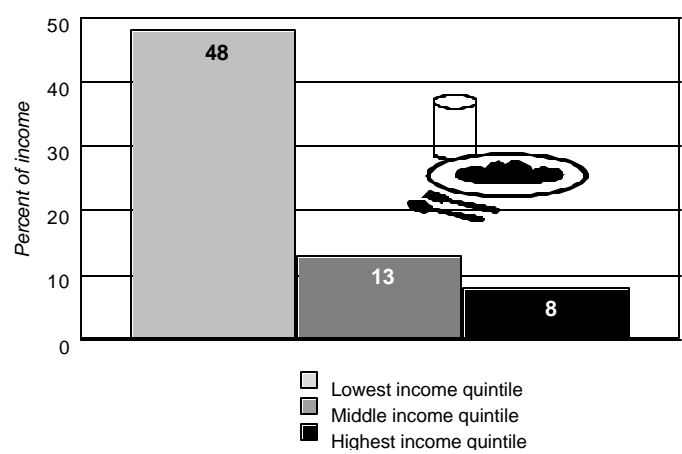
Per capita food spending, by income quintile, 1998



**Percentage of income spent on food declines as income rises**

While the amount spent on food increases with household income, the percentage of income spent on food decreases as income rises. In 1998 low-income households spent about 48 percent of their income on food, while other income groups spent much less. Middle-income households spent about 13 percent, and the wealthiest households spent about 8 percent, figures fairly constant over the 1990's.

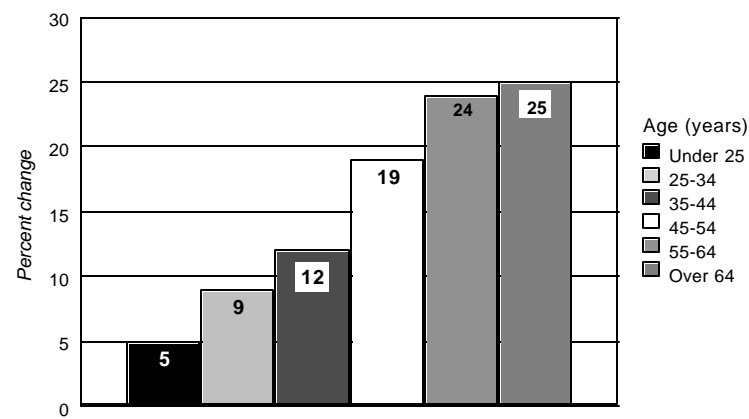
**Income spent on food, by income quintile, 1998**



**Older households experienced the largest percentage increase in food spending**

Households headed by people over age 64 increased their per person food spending between 1990 and 1998 by 25 percent, the highest percentage change of any age group. Households headed by people under age 25 experienced a 5-percent increase per person, and those headed by people between ages 25 to 34 experienced a 9-percent increase per person.

**Change in per person food spending, by age, 1990-98**



Source: Blisard, N., 2000, Food spending by U.S. households grew steadily in the 1990's, FoodReview 23(3):18-22.

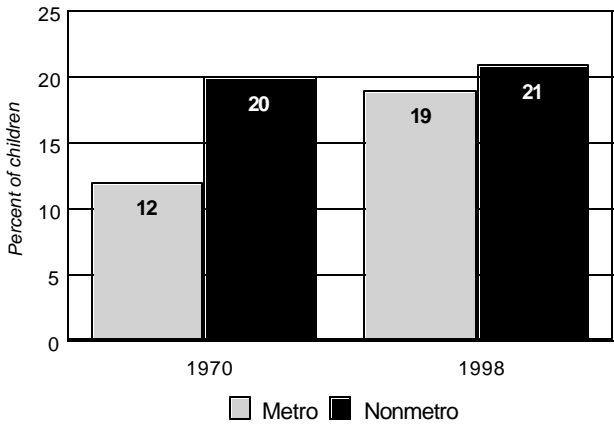
## Factors Affecting High Child Poverty in the Rural South

Child poverty in the 1990’s remained high, especially in the rural South. In 1998 the poverty rate for children (under age 18) in the rural South was nearly 27 percent, compared with 17 percent for rural children in the rest of the Nation. A higher proportion of poor children in the rural South are in severe poverty, a level of family income under 50 percent of the poverty level. Poor children are more likely to live in mother-only families; to be Black; and to have parents who are younger, less educated, and not employed. The composition of the population of the rural South contributes to the high child poverty in the region.

### Child poverty historically higher in rural areas

Child poverty has historically been higher in rural areas than in urban areas, especially in the South. In 1970 the child poverty rate was 12 percent in metro areas and 20 percent in nonmetro areas. By 1998 the metro child poverty rate increased to 19 percent and the nonmetro child poverty rate increased slightly to 21 percent.

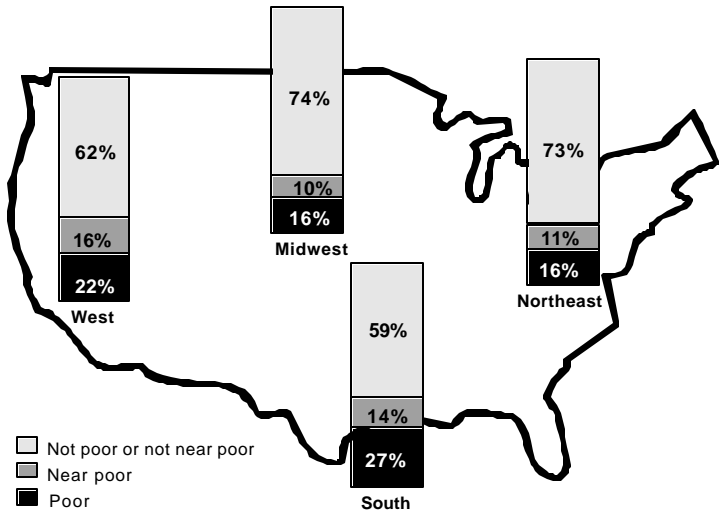
Poverty status of children by metro-nonmetro status, 1970 vs. 1998



### Child poverty is higher in the rural South

Child poverty is more pervasive in the rural South than in other rural areas. In 1998, 27 percent of children in the nonmetro South were poor, compared with 16 percent of children both in the nonmetro Northeast and Midwest and 22 percent of children in the nonmetro West. A higher percentage of rural Southern children were also near poor (in families with incomes 100-149 percent of the official poverty threshold), compared with children in the rural Midwest and Northeast.

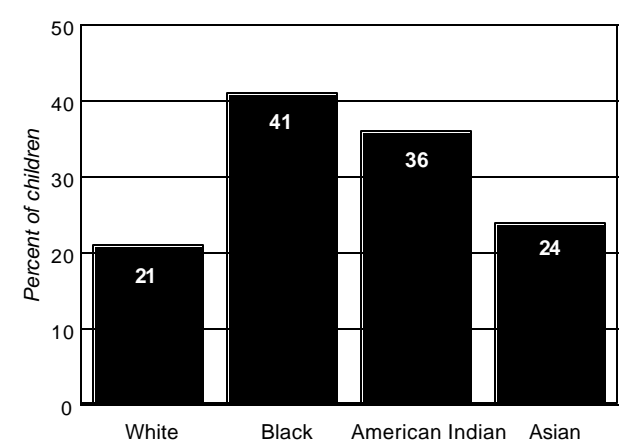
Poverty status of nonmetro children by region, 1998



**Non-White children in the rural South more likely to be poor than are White children**

The poverty rate for White children in the rural South was 21 percent in 1998. By contrast, the poverty rate for non-White children in the rural South was higher—41 percent for Black children, 36 percent for American Indians, and 24 percent for Asians. Black children’s poverty rate was nearly twice the rate for White children in rural areas.

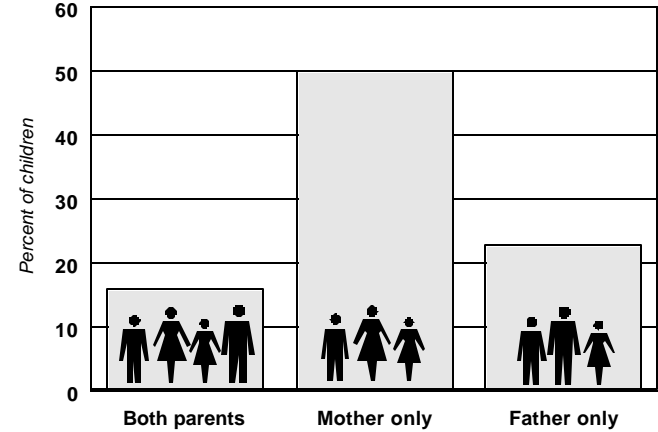
Poverty rate for nonmetro Southern children by race, 1998



**Children in mother-only families in the rural South also more likely to be poor**

Family structure has an enormous effect on the well-being of children in the rural South. A higher percentage of rural Southern children in mother- and father-only families (50 and 23 percent, respectively) live in poverty, compared with children in two-parent families (16 percent). In one-parent families, only a single parent generates income, and that effort is constrained by child care arrangements.

Poverty rate for nonmetro Southern children by family structure, 1998



Source: Rogers, C.C., 2001, Factors affecting high child poverty in the rural South, Rural America 15(4):50-58.